

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	7 February 2024	
Subject:	Suspension of 'Purchase in Reserve' Grave Spaces			
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources			
Wards Affected:	All			
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes	
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Appendices:	None			

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To suspend the ability to purchase in reserve grave spaces in view of limited space. Plots will continue to be available for immediate use. All graves that have already been purchased in reserve will still remain.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) Gloucester City Council implement a suspension on the ability to purchase in reserve graves until an additional site for burial land is available;
- (2) authority be delegated to Head of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to remove the suspension once additional burial land has been secured.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is aware of the importance of the use of burial land to accommodate all faiths and beliefs of our city residents, The Council own 2 Cemeteries one in Tredworth Road which was closed to new burials in 1990's and can only be used for purchase in reserve burials and reopens into an existing grave, Coney Hill which at present is an open cemetery to all residents of any areas in and out of the City boundary. Gloucester city council have been offering purchase in reserve graves since 1970's but due to only having approximately 3 – 5 years of burial space left at coney hill cemetery we need to put a hold on purchase in reserve graves until additional burial land is located.
- 3.2 Council have been actively seeking additional burial land to continue to offer residents the option of burial. This is an ongoing project to increase burial space in the City. We hope to have secured additional burial land by December 2025

3.3 This report is seeking approval to suspend the purchase of graves in reserve, to maintain the burial space currently available.

3.4 Failure to put a hold on purchase in reserve graves, whilst we look to secure new burial land will put significant pressure on our burial land and the services we are able to offer, Gloucester residents may have to look outside of the City for burial options

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 To continue to allow purchase in reserve graves at Gloucester Cemetery. This would mean burial land is used sooner than the planned and we would no longer be able to offer residents the option of burial which means the residents who have a religious belief of burial not cremation may not be able to be accommodated at Gloucester.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 The rationale behind the suspension is to ensure we have sufficient space to accommodate residents needs into the future, to allow us to ensure that we accommodate all residents that do not wish to be cremated.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 Review of burial land available to ensure we continue to offer the option of burial to our residents who have a religious belief of burial not cremation.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 This report would reduce advance sales, however it shouldn't have long term financial implications with graves been purchased at the time of need as opposed to in advance.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The statutory requirements in relation to local authority ("a burial authority") maintained burial grounds are primarily contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 ("the Regulations").

Under the Regulations a burial authority may do all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery.

There is no statutory duty requiring a local authority/burial authority to provide burial grounds but any management is governed by the Regulations. The Regulations do not prevent a local authority from suspending the purchase of graves in advance.

9.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

9.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

Background Documents: None